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TDLR files administrative cases against unlicensed contractors in nationwide effort

Registered sex offender among those who offered unlicensed work

AUSTIN—Enforcement investigators for the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) opened 37 cases in June against people in the Houston area who offered to perform work but did not have electrician or air conditioning contractor licenses as required by state law.

The cases were filed after the investigators ran a one-week undercover sting as part of a national enforcement effort in June that was coordinated by the National Association of State Contractors Licensing Agencies (NASCLA).

One of the unlicensed individuals who offered to perform work was a high-risk registered sex offender who had been convicted of indecency with a child several times.

“Hiring an unlicensed electrician or air conditioning contractor can put you and your family at great risk,” said TDLR Executive Director Mike Arismendez Jr. “Licensed service providers have had criminal background checks – and if they have certain criminal convictions, they can only work in specific areas under direct, in-person supervision.”

During the sting, TDLR investigators contacted people who advertised electrical and air conditioning services in local newspapers or on social media and did not include license information in the ads as they’re required to do by state law. Investigators have filed 37 enforcement cases against unlicensed electricians and air conditioning contractors who offered to perform unlicensed work during the sting.

Investigators opened 10 additional cases against licensed electricians and air conditioning contractors for other administrative violations.

In addition to the Houston sting, TDLR Regulatory Program Management electrician program staff conducted jobsite sweeps in Bryan, Dripping Springs, Port Arthur, Beaumont, and Taylor to check the license status of 196 people working as electricians at various construction projects. Eight of the electricians

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were found to have expired licenses and two were unlicensed. All 10 now have either renewed their license or have obtained the required license. TDLR staff noted that the majority of those working as electricians were licensed as required.

TDLR urges Texas consumers hiring electricians and air conditioning and refrigeration contractors should always check to make sure their service providers are licensed by TDLR. Licensed service providers have completed training and passed examinations that cover regulations and building codes designed to protect health and safety. They also have liability insurance.

When hiring a construction contractor, NASCLA recommends that consumers:

- Verify the contractor is actively licensed; always hire a licensed contractor
- Check TDLR licenses here: <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/LicenseSearch/>
- Get 2-3 estimates – don't automatically accept the lowest bid
- Check at least 3 references
- Require a written contract
- Don't make a large down payment; make payments as work is completed
- Monitor the job in progress
- Don't make the final payment until the job is complete
- Keep all paperwork related to your job

See the NASCLA website for [more consumer awareness tips](#).

About TDLR

TDLR provides regulatory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency regulates 37 business and occupational licensing programs with almost 1,000,000 licensees across the state.

Visit TDLR's [website](#) for more information and resources. You can search the [TDLR licensee database](#), and also find [past violations](#) in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR's Customer Service line is available anytime between 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

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